



## **LENT 2017** **AT ST. TEILO'S WHITCHURCH WITH OUR LADY OF LOURDES GABALFA**

### Lenten Message from Archbishop George Stack:

“Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.... He fasted forty days and forty nights” (Matthew 4:1-2)

The Forty Days of Lent have a great biblical precedent, not least in the forty years the people of Israel wandered the desert in search of the Promised Land. The example for our own practice of “Quadragesima” lies in the forty days Jesus was in the wilderness before he undertook his public ministry. A time of discipline and preparation is important before any important event or decision in life. Prayer, Fasting and Abstinence are the three tools we use as we prepare to celebrate the great mystery of Easter the Passion Death and Resurrection of our Lord. No accident that the Lenten exercises really came into focus with the Baptism of Adult Converts at the Easter Vigil and the Reconciliation of Sinners during the days preceding it. These important events also lie in the foundation of the Lenten Season.

Fasting and Abstinence have nothing to do with hating or despising the world and its material goods. Neither are they ways of punishing ourselves. Fasting is one way in which we deepen our awareness of God. By denying ourselves food, or a luxury (the sweets, the cigarettes, the alcohol) what else do we do except say “I do not depend on these things”. It enables us to step back from the usual habits and distractions and give particular attention to God. An outward restraint can be a sign and symbol of an inner attention, and a help towards it. This is a meaning of the great symbol of ashes given on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. This is also the Prayer which lies at the heart of Lent. Reminding ourselves to give time to God so that God may speak to us in the silence of our heart.

All major faiths encourage fasting and abstinence as spiritual disciplines. The Christian Faith is no exception. Jesus himself fasted in the desert as part of his preparation to meet his tempter. The early Christians observed fasts. (Acts 13:2 14:23). The Fathers of the Early Church recommended the practice also. “Fasting is food for the soul, nourishment for the spirit. (Ambrose of Milan c.339-97).

When Jesus fasted in the wilderness for forty days, he did so in order to clarify his relationship with God and the nature of his calling. To face inner temptation, he needed to explore how he stood in relation to material needs and worldly power, and to affirm that his ultimate trust was in God “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God”. (Matthew 4:4).

Our fasting and abstinence, if we are serious about them, have a particular significance in a world dominated by a culture of consumption. Today we are all encouraged to think of ourselves as ‘consumers’ or ‘customers’, as if the material things of creation had no other meaning than to be used by human beings. Fasting is a form of restraint in which we stand back to contemplate things as they are in themselves, as they are in relationship to God the creator, and not just as they exist for us. “Fasting prevents us from identifying ourselves with the world in order merely to possess it, and enables us to see the world in a light coming from elsewhere. Then every creature, every thing, becomes an object of contemplation. Fasting puts between ourselves and the world a wondering and respectful distance”. So wrote Oliver Clement, an Orthodox Christian theologian who was born into an agnostic family in 1921.

Real enjoyment of the world comes not from possessing it or consuming it, but from a detached enjoyment of its goodness. Far from being a negative reaction to the material world, fasting is a positive affirmation of it. Fasting leads to thanksgiving. In fact, there is no effective act of thanksgiving -no Eucharist- without some form of self restraint.

Fasting is always linked in the teaching of the Fathers with prayer and almsgiving. Charitable giving is part and parcel of Lent. Solidarity demands that others who are in need benefit from our self restraint – otherwise even fasting and abstinence can be seen as self indulgence, as the slimming world reminds us! Each one of us will have our own good intentions as we receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. Self denial and solidarity with the poor must surely be part and parcel of our Lenten practice. The Diocesan charity for Lent is the support of the Syrian Refugee Families Project. Let our prayer, fasting and abstinence be of benefit not just to ourselves but to those who are in desperate need of our charitable support.

## LENTEN REFLECTION SESSIONS

During Lent we have two special talks to deepen our understanding of the faith and our commitment to the life of a follower of Jesus. These take place at the Church Hall at Our Lady of Lourdes, Gabalfa following Mass on Wednesday evening.

Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> of March	<b>Topic:</b> The Lenten Season as a καιρός (Kairos) time - a time of great opportunity.  Deacon Pasquale Cinotti from All Saints Parish, Newport
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> of March	Fr James Siemens, Priest of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Cardiff. Topic to be confirmed

## PRAYING FOR PETER DAVIES

To show the parish's support for Peter Davies' journey into commitment to the Lord in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, we will pray each day of Lent that Peter may receive the graces to fulfil the call the Lord has made to him.

Father, in Your plan for salvation, You provide shepherds for Your people. Raise up worthy ministers for Your altars and ardent but gentle servants of the Gospel. Help those preparing for priesthood, especially our brother, Peter. **Amen.**  
Mary, Queen of the Apostles, **pray for us.**

## LENTEN ALMS – SYRIAN REFUGEE FUND

The Archdiocese is planning to make a redundant presbytery available as a home for a Syrian refugee family. As well as accommodation, they will need a number of support services, including food, money, clothing, furniture, emotional support, language skills etc., In the light of our prayers "for the homeless, the refugees and those suffer through violence and war" it seems appropriate to allocate our Lenten Alms to this important cause in our midst.

## OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS DURING LENT

Each Friday of Lent at the Cornerstone, Charles St – 1.30pm	<b>Friday Fast Lunch and Lenten Talk</b> St. David's Cathedral will host a Bread and Soup lunch each Friday during Lent with a short Lenten talk or meditation by the Archbishop for those who join in this Lenten exercise. These lunches will be held at The Cornerstone at 1.30pm following the regular Mass at the Cathedral. The proceeds from the lunches will be given to the Syrian Refugee Family Fund.
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>CAFOD Lent Fast Day</b> This year CAFOD's focus is on the work its partners are doing in Zambia. CAFOD has worked in Zambia since the 1980s. One of CAFOD's partners in Zambia are the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The Sisters are based in Mbala in Northern Zambia, close to Tanzania. They came to Mbala

	<p>district in 1962 at the request of the government and with approval of the then Bishop of Mbala.</p> <p>The sisters have developed a programme set up by the nuns called 'Households in Distress' which CAFOD supports. This programme works with the poor and marginalised and also supports young adults with special needs and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>The UK government has again promised to match every pound and penny given to CAFOD this Lent.</p>
<p>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> to Friday the 31<sup>st</sup> of March</p>	<p><b>Deanery Confessions</b></p> <p>The priests of the Cardiff deanery have arranged for there to be opportunity for confessions each afternoon and evening during this week across the City. At least three priests will be available at each of the sessions</p> <p><b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March</b>  2 pm – 3 pm – St Joseph's, Penarth  7 pm – 8 pm – St Helen's, Barry</p> <p><b>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March</b>  2 pm – 3 pm – St David's Cathedral  7 pm – 8 pm – St Brigid's</p> <p><b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March</b>  2 pm – 3 pm – St Teilo's  7 pm – 8 pm – St Philip Evans'</p> <p><b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March</b>  2 pm – 3 pm – St Peter's  7 pm – 8 pm – St Mary's</p> <p><b>Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>  2 pm – 3 pm – St Francis'  7 pm – 8 pm – St Cadoc's</p>
<p>Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> of March</p>	<p><b>Mothering Sunday</b></p> <p>A special blessing and prayer for all families will take place at all Masses this Sunday.</p>
<p>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> of April - 7.00 pm</p>	<p><b>Deanery Lenten Station Mass</b> – St. David's College</p> <p>This year's Lenten Station Mass for our Deanery takes place at the Sixth Form College, Ty-Gwyn Rd. We are all encouraged to attend the Station Mass where the Archbishop brings together the priests and parishioners of the deanery to celebrate our Lenten observances.</p>